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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 000553

SIPDIS

FOR OES/ENV - D. BROWN

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TAGS: [SENV](#) [ETRD](#) [ECON](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#)

SUBJECT: EGYPT: DEMARCHE ON FINAL NEGOTIATIONS ON STRATEGIC APPROACH TO INTERNATIONAL CHEMICALS MANAGEMENT (SAICM)

REF: STATE 11460

Classified by ECPO Minister Counselor Michael Corbin for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (SBU) Summary. A GOE participant in the SAICM process reports that the GOE is supportive of U.S. positions regarding precaution, scope, a savings clause, and the Global Plan of Action. However, post does not expect the GOE delegation to vigorously promote these positions during the February 4-6 SAICM meeting. End summary.

2. (SBU) ECPO Counselor and Science Officer met with Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Environmental Counselor (and GOE SAICM delegate) Omar Ali Abou Eiche January 30 to seek Egypt's support for the U.S. position during the upcoming SAICM conference in Dubai. Regarding precaution, Abou Eiche expressed his understanding that paragraph 14 of the Overarching Policy Strategy (OPS) had been amended to meet U.S. concerns, especially with regard to Rio Principle 15.

3. (SBU) The GOE backs the U.S. position that SAICM should not be expanded to address issues such as food additives and pharmaceuticals, but Abou Eiche suggested that current language in the OPS was already clear in that regard. Similarly, Abou Eiche agreed that insertion of a "savings clause" to reinforce the non-binding nature of the OPS would be useful. He said that the GOE "can" support the edit proposed in reftel, but suggested the GOE did not consider such a clause absolutely necessary.

4. (SBU) Global Plan of Action (GPA): Abou Eiche stated that he understood that the discussion of the GPA indicated that it was just a "guiding document" and that the president of the preparatory committee has suggested that language be inserted to make it clear that the topics listed in the GPA are just topics for discussion, specifically, that the GPA is "annexed" but not agreed on; it is a "strategy" subject to revision and further discussion.

5. (SBU) Asked about the GOE's goals for the Dubai meeting, Abou Eiche said the GOE would like to see more discussion of financial assistance for poor countries, stressing that developing countries do not have the know-how to substitute chemicals recommended by the SAICM. The GOE is particularly interested in a "quick start" program where developed countries finance concrete programs to assist developing countries to meet their recommendations of the SAICM.

6. (C) Comment: While Abou Eiche repeatedly expressed support for U.S. positions in general terms, it seems unlikely the GOE will vigorously promote or defend those positions. While the GOE supports our basic approach regarding scope and a savings clause, it does not consider essential the explicit clarifications we are seeking on these issues. End comment.
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